

# THE REHEARSAL.

1. The Necessity of an *OUTWARD Consecration to the Priesthood;*
2. The Benefit of it to us. And the *Blasphemy of the People Pretending to Confer it.*
3. Hence the *Contempt of the Priesthood.* First by *Kings;* and then by the *People.*
4. The Judgment upon *Schismatics to think themselves in the Right.*
5. That Text *Heb. v. 1.* turn'd against them.
6. The Succession of the *Christian Priesthood more Certain than that of the Levitical.*
7. Why the *Christian Priesthood by Consecration, and that of the Levitical by Inheritance.*
8. Greater Sin in *Despising the Christian Priesthood, than the Levitical.*

SATURDAY, November 1. 1707.

(1.) Country-man: **W**HAT you said last time, Master, has made a Great Impression upon me, That Christ Himself the Son of God, tho' Ordain'd from Eternity to be a Priest, and Prophecy'd of so long before, yet that when He came in the Flesh, He did not Begin to Preach, or Execute any Part of His Priestly Office, till after His Commission was Proclaim'd by the voice of God from Heaven, at His Baptism, in the Audience of all the People, and that the Holy Spirit Descended upon Him in a visible Shape as of a Dove, in all their Sights, giving Conviction even to their Outward Senses. And that the Apostle Argues from hence, That He did not Glorify Himself to be made a Priest, but He that said unto Him, Thou art my Son, Thou art a Priest for Ever, &c. And that none can take this Honour to Himself, but he that is Called of God as was Aaron, that is by an *Outward Commission given him by God,* for so Aaron was Called, being *Outwardly Consecrated by Moses,* in Presence of all the People. And this was the Argument Moses us'd against Korah, that he wou'd Thrust himself into the *Priesthood without any Call from God,* tho' he had the *Call of the People,* and much *Holiness,* as he Pretend'd. But the *Call of God to the Priesthood was Always an Outward Call,* as you have shew'd.

(2.) Rehearsal. And it is a Great Mercy to us. For how otherwise shou'd we know who were our Priests? If *Inward Holiness* were the *Call,* how Easily are People Impos'd upon by false Pretenders, and by Hypocrites? Especially when they Flatter the

People, like Korah, and call them all *Holy* too! And as the People, who know not the *Heart,* are not good Judges of the Qualifications for the *Priesthood.*

So, on the other hand they can have no Authority to Invest any Man with this Honour: Because the *Office of the Priesthood is to Transact with us as from God,* to Bless in His Name, and to Minister to us in those *Ordinances* He has Commanded, to *Sign and Seal His Covenant with us,* and to us, as His *Ambassadors* Impowr'd by him to this Purpose. And who can Appoint an *Ambassador* but the King who sends him? who else can give him this *Authority?* How otherwise is the King oblig'd to Ratifie what is *Sign'd by his Ambassador in his Name pursuant to his Instructions?* As it is *Treason for any Subject to Presume to send an Ambassador in the Name of his King,* it is Really taking upon himself to be *King:* So is it the Greatest Blasphemy for any *Man or Men* to take upon them to Appoint Priests for God, that is, in plain Consequence, *Usurping the Prerogative of God,* and, as much as in our Power, to *Dethrone* Him, and set up our selves in *His Place.*

(3.) Country-man: The *Apostle call'd them selves Ambassadors of Christ.* And now every *Tag, Rag, and Long Tail call them selves his Ambassadors too,* by a *Call from the People!* Good God! How is the *Priesthood vilify'd with us!* Was it a *Glory to Christ to be made a Priest?* And now, from this vile *Profitation of it,* it is come to be thought the *Meanest of Employments, hardly Beffiting a Gentleman!*

Rehears. The twelve Tribes once strove for it, as the highest Honour. And it fell

not

not into Contempt, till a King set up by the People, took upon him to Dispose of the Priesthood too, and made Priests of the meanest of the People. And this thing became Sin to the House of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to Destroy it from off the Face of the Earth. 1 Kin. xiii. 34. Thus God express'd His Indignation against the first Prophaner of the Priesthood, tho' these were Priests he had set up for his Calves. But God will not have the Notion of Priesthood to be Pillify'd, tho' in an Idolatrous Worship. Joseph had Respect to this, and wou'd not suffer the Lands of the Priests to be Sold, when all the rest of Egypt was Sold to the King.

*Country-m.* When the Priesthood fell into the Hands of the King, to be Dispos'd of by him, it soon fell under the Feet of the Beasts of the People, when they had taken upon them to make Kings too.

(4.) Rehears. And this Witchcraft is in the Sin of Rebellion, That People are given up to Believe a Lie, and Think they are in the Right. Thus we must Presume Korah thought, when he Appear'd with his Censers before the Lord, which was a Solemn Appeal to Him, for the Justice of his Cause, That the Lord might thereby shew whom He had Chosen, and who were Holy. Num. xvi. 7. Thus have we heard of many Appeals to God by our Dissenters.

(5.) *Country-m.* But they lay great Stress upon that Description given of a Priest, Heb. v. 1. That every High Priest taken from among Men, is Ordained for Men, in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both Gifts and Sacrifices for Sins. They say, That here Priests are Ordained for Men.

Rehears. But it is not said By Men. No doubt Priests were Ordained for the Benefit of Men. And here it is told, to offer both Gifts and Sacrifices for Sins. But the People were not to Offer their own Gifts nor their Sacrifices except by the Hands of the Priests. And these are call'd things Pertaining to God. And who but God Himself can Ordain in things pertaining to God? Can we Appoint and Ordain for Him? Therefor the Apostle Argues ver. 4. That no Man taketh this Honour to himself, but he that is Called of God. And how Called? As was Aaron that is, by an outward Call and Consecration to that Office, by those who had Power from God so to Appoint and Consecrate him. Thence the Apostle carries on the Argument to Christ Himself, and shews, That He was thus Called of God, but did not Glorify himself to be a Priest, as by his own Authority. And, as I told you before, He did not Enter upon the Execution of His Priesthood, till His Commission was publickly Proclaim'd from Heaven.

(6.) *Country-m.* But the Dissenters say, That the Deduction of the Christian Priesthood is not so Plain and Ascertain'd as was that of the Levitical, which being Fixed to one Tribe ther cou'd be no mistaking of it.

Rehears. Did not Korah mistake it, who was one of that Tribe, tho' not of the Family of Aaron? Did not Jeroboam mistake it; and the Ten Tribes with him, who set up other Priests? Did not Alich mistake it, who Consecrated his Son to be a Priest who was not of the TRIBE of Levi? Did not Sanballat and the Samaritans mistake it who set up another Temple? And many other mistakes of this sort we find in the History of the Jews after the Captivity, and after the Maccabees. And they mistook so long at last, till the Succession of their Priesthood was lost, as it is at this Day.

But Blessed be God, the Succession of the Christian Bishops is Open and Flagrant to this Day, in all the Churches of the World, except among the little Calvinists, who are but of Yesterday!

(7.) One Tribe was sufficient for Priests to Eleven Tribes. But when Christianity was to be Extended to the utmost Parts of the Earth, the Priesthood then cou'd not be Confin'd to one Family. But the Succession of it went afterwards by Consecration, and not by Inheritance. And, as I have said, has been better Preserv'd.

(8.) And now as the Apostle says, If he Died without Mercy, who Despis'd Moses's Law, and the Priesthood which he set up; Of how much sorcer Punishment, Suppose ye, shall he be thought Worthy, who hath Trampled under foot the Son of God, and that Church and Priesthood which He has Ordained, and Promis'd to be with it to the End of the World?

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